

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
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JERUSALEM PASS SECRETARY'S PARTY

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TAGS: IS US PGOV
SUBJ: REACTION TO OPENING DAY OF JERUSALEM CONFERENCE

SUMMARY: AN EXTENSIVE REPORTING ON THE OPENING OF THE
JERUSALEM CONFERENCE, NO CONSENSUS VIEW OF THE DAY'S
EVENTS HAS DEVELOPED. ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL STUMBLING
BLOCKS AND OUTCOMES DIFFER WIDELY. THE BEGIN DINNER
SPEECH IS THE SUBJECT OF MUCH COMMENT: THE PRESS IS
MILDLY CRITICAL, WHILE KNESSET MEMBERS REACT ALONG
PARTY LINES. MORNING PRESS OPTIMISM GIVES WAY TO YEDIDOT
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AND MAARIV'S ACCENT ON BLEAK PROSPECTS. END SUMMARY

1. EXTENSIVE AND PROMINENT COVERAGE OF THE JERUSALEM
TALKS CONTINUE TO DOMINATE THE LOCAL MEDIA. DETAILED
SUMMARIES OF OPENING DAY EVENTS ARE ACCOMPANIED BY
REACTIONS TO AND ANALYSES OF THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:
BEGIN'S DINNER SPEECH, ANTICIPATED NEGOTIATION DIFFICULTIES,

A US INITIATIVE, A BRUITED WASHINGTON THREE-WAY SUMMIT,
AND SADAT'S NEXT MOVE.

2. NO COHERENT OVERALL REACTION TO THE EVENTS OF THE
OPENING DAY OF NEGOTIATIONS IS DISCERNIBLE. IN FACT
A CERTAIN CONFUSION SEEMS TO MARK PRESS REPORTAGE.
FOR EXAMPLE, A YEDIOT ARTICLE ENTITLED "DEAD END" IS
PLACED IN IMMEDIATE OPPOSITION TO A PIECE HEADLINED
"MOSHE DAYAN: NO DEAD END; NO PROGRESS." MAARIV'S
LEAD ARTICLE STATES THAT THE SINAI SETTLEMENT ISSUE
NOT THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION, THREATENS NEGOTIATING
PROSPECTS; THE JERUSALEM POST'S BANNER READS, ON THE
OTHER HAND, "GUARDED OPTIMISM AS JERUSALEM PARLEY
BEGINS--WEST BANK MAYOR HURDLE, SINAI ISSUES 'CAN BE
SOLVED.'"

3. THE BEGIN AND KAMEL DINNER SPEECHES ARE EITHER
NOT MENTIONED, OR COVERED ONLY BRIEFLY IN THE MORNING
PAPERS (DUE TO PRESS DEADLINE) BUT RECEIVE HEAVY PLAY
IN MAARIV AND YEDIOT. IN REPORTS ON THE NEGATIVE
AMERICAN AND EGYPTIAN REACTIONS TO BEGIN'S SPEECH, BOTH
PAPERS ADOPT CRITICAL TONES. (ONE OF MAARIV'S
TWO ARTICLES IS HEADLINED: "A POLITICAL SPEECH AT A
FESTIVE DINNER.") BOTH PAPERS STRESS THAT THE SPEECH
FOLLOWED A BEGIN-KAMEL UNDERSTANDING THAT DAMAGING
PUBLIC STATEMENTS MUST BE MINIMIZED AND THAT THE
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AMERICAN CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION PRESENT AND EVEN
ISRAELI OBSERVERS REGARDED BEGIN'S REMARKS AS A SERIOUS
BREACH OF ETIQUETTE. THERE ARE CONFLICTING CLAIMS
OF ADVANCE NOTIFICATION OF THE EGYPTIAN AND AMERICAN
DELEGATIONS REGARDING THE NATURE OF THE SPEECH. A
YEDIOT EDITORIAL DEFENDS BEGIN, WHILE MAARIV TAKES
THE SANGUINE VIEW THAT THE SPEECH WAS AN ACCURATE
REFLECTION OF THE GULF STILL SEPARATING THE PARTIES.
CONVERSATIONS WITH KNESSET MEMBERS INDICATE THAT ISRAELI
REACTIONS TO BEGIN'S SPEECH ARE INTENSE AND SPLIT ALONG
PARTY LINES. LIKUD MEMBERS VEHEMENTLY DEFEND BEGIN'S
RIGHT TO RESPOND TO KAMEL'S AIRPORT ARRIVAL STATEMENT,
WHILE LABOR MKS ATTACK BEGIN'S SENSE OF TIMING AND
MAINTAIN THAT THE SPEECH WILL HAVE DAMAGING CONSEQUENCES.
DANIEL BLOCH OF DAVAR, IN CONVERSATION, CAUSTICALLY
REFERRED TO BEGIN'S GROSS VIOLATION OF ARAB RULES OF
HOSPITALITY, AND REGRETTE THE GRATUITOUS SULLYING
OF THE BUOYANT PRE-SPEECH ATMOSPHERE.

4. THE MOST NOTEWORTHY FEATURE OF PRESS REACTION
TO YESTERDAY'S EVENTS IS THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE
GUARDEDLY OPTIMISTIC REPORTAGE AND COMMENTS OF THE

MORNING PRESS, AND THE PESSIMISTIC TONES OF MAARIV
AND YEDIOT'S ANALYSES. THUS, BLOCH IN DAVAR NOTES THE
"AIR OF OPTIMISM AND CONSTRUCTIVENESS" AND THE JERUSALEM
POST EDITORIALIZES THAT "THE FIRST REPORTS GIVE REASON
TO BELIEVE THAT THE GULF MAY YET BE BRIDGED." THE EVENING
PRESS, ON THE OTHER HAND, ASSESSES THE DAMAGE WROUGHT
BY BEGIN'S SPEECH, SPECULATES ON A POSSIBLE NEGOTIATION
BREAKDOWN, AND ANTICIPATES SADAT'S IMMINENT WITHDRAWAL
OF HIS PEACE INITIATIVE. LEWIS

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